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TITLE: Collaboration as Technology Transfer: Research Informing Practice, Practice Informing Research in Community Settings

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ISSUE: Best prevention practice suggests HIV interventions require outcome-based evaluation, adaptation to local circumstances, and fidelity in implementation, acceptability to organizations and clients, and continuous updating as the HIV epidemic changes. A collaborative model for using research to improve practice and practice to improve research in HIV prevention is presented.

SETTING: The project takes place in inner-city, suburban and rural community-based organizations, housing projects, schools and churches in New York State; is implemented by trainers trained by Cornell Cooperative Extension, National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. (NDRI) and community collaborators; is monitored by Cornell trainers; and is NDRI and Cornell University using materials developed, often collaboratively, by both institutions. The project has also generated international materials dissemination and consultation.

PROJECT: Cornell, client advisory boards, and NDRI have collaboratively modified a curriculum originally developed by Cornell to teach parents/parent figures to be HIV educators of their children. The curriculum covers HIV information, safety skills, child development, parent-child communication, and negotiation of safety, transfer of safety skills to children and safe and sensitive socializing with persons with HIV. The community co-design process for modifying the curriculum developed by NDRI in high-seroprevalence urban areas is now being tested by Cornell in a rural county.

RESULTS: In state and nationally funded (NMH) evaluations, program effects on trainers, parent figures, adults influenced by parent figures, and children have been demonstrated. Since the program's inception in 1989, over 2,600 trainers, over 70,000 adults, and their children have been reached. Research, training and client feedback have suggested new issues/emphases.

LESSONS LEARNED: The research/training/practice collaboration has evolved over time. Feedback mechanisms that developed informally have formalized, and changed cultures of cooperative organizations.

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